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FOR IO/RHS AOSTERMEIER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/10/2018  
TAGS: PHUM PREL KDEM LH  
SUBJECT: LITHUANIA WISHES US LUCK FOR PRISONERS OF  
CONSCIENCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS EVENT

REF: SECSTATE 70829

Classified By: Ambassador John A. Cloud for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) Irena Skardziuviene, Head of the MFA's UN and Council of Europe Division, told us on July 2 that the GOL was pleased with the EU-U.S. cooperation on the prisoners of conscience declaration. She said that, although she was not clear on the details, she thought it was unfortunate that there was apparently some disagreement about hosting an event in Geneva. She added, however, that she hopes the event in New York on July 24 goes well.

¶2. (C) We followed up with Darius Staniulis, head of the MFA's Human Rights and NGOs Division, on June 11. He told us that there was ongoing discussion within the EU of whether or not to take a common position on the event. He noted that during discussions of the Prisoners of Conscience declaration there was the sense that there would be two events, one in Geneva and one in New York, and that the Geneva event would come first and be more prominent. Some in the EU are disappointed that it did not work out that way. He added that discussions in EU circles include concerns that the margins of the ECOSOC meetings, which do not primarily focus on human rights, are not the most appropriate venue for the event. He said that the GOL understands that an event in Geneva would be awkward, given the USG's position on the HRC. He added, however, that the GOL will not commit to supporting the New York event in the face of a potential EU common position. If there is no EU common position, he thinks there is a possibility that the GOL would be a co-sponsor of the New York event, although time is already short.

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